

of the Thrall Library in Middletown, N.Y. On January 12, 2001 the Middletown Thrall Library will celebrate 100 years of service to our community.

The Thrall Library was first constructed at the turn of the century with funds donated by Mrs. Sabra Maretta Thrall. Mrs. Thrall gave the City of Middletown \$30,000 with the instruction that the money was to be used to build a public library. It was important to Mrs. Thrall that all residents have access to the library and that it remains open to the public.

At the time Mrs. Thrall made her donation, Middletown was a thriving, vital railroad center in the midst of rich, productive farm land. Stately mansions sprang up in Middletown as a result of the fortunes which were made in the boom economy brought about by the explosion in industry and transportation which touched most parts of our nation. Mrs. Thrall was a widow whose late husband had made his fortune as a grocer, both in Middletown and in New York City.

Although Mrs. S. Maretta Thrall was a private person, it can be deduced that her generosity may have been inspired by Andrew Carnegie, the man who became a millionaire in the steel industry and who donated millions of dollars to construct libraries in over 1,400 communities throughout the United States.

Mrs. Thrall's obituary was published on July 7, 1897. She was about 65 years of age at the time of her passing, and was a widow preceded in death not only by her husband but also by her only brother and only child. Her obituary stated that she had "a naturally bright and sunny disposition, and was surrounded by friends." The obituary went on to say that she could not enjoy her fortune because "disease laid its stern hand upon her."

Prior to her death Mrs. Thrall had left money and land to the City of Middletown for what were known as Thrall Hospital and Thrall Park. The provisions for the Thrall Library were included in a codicil to her will. The library was built on a city owned lot on Orchard Street.

Now a century old, the Thrall Library has made a great amount of progress throughout the years. When its doors first opened it was simply just a quiet place to research and read. However, the Thrall Library has evolved into so much more. It is now a resource center for the community. The library houses meeting rooms for local groups to gather at. As well, the library has instituted a number of programs for children to take part in. Located at the library are several computers that provide free Internet services to its patrons. Often, we fail to realize just how important our libraries are, and how much they offer.

On February 13, 1995, the Thrall Library officially opened for business at its new location, the olde Erie Railroad Station at 11-19 Depot Street in Middletown—just a few steps from its original building on Orchard Street. In this modern, new location, the Thrall Library prepared to meet the challenges of the communications and education explosion which would usher in the new millennium.

Public libraries are extremely important to our communities. They enlighten and enrich all of the patrons that choose to take advantage of the vast resources that they have to offer. Public libraries educate all walks of life, and

stand as a common ground for all those who want to learn. S. Maretta Thrall realized this.

Today's libraries work hard to reach out to the cultural, social, and educational needs of their patrons. The Thrall Library is constantly looking for new ways to aid our community. With over seventeen thousand card holders to date, the number of members continues to rise.

In 1983, I had the honor of placing the Thrall Library on the list of Federal Depository Libraries. Since then, Thrall Library has been one of two libraries in my Congressional District to be provided with all federal government publications.

In honor of their 100th anniversary and all of the great work that the Thrall Library has achieved over the years, the members of the library plan to commemorate this milestone event throughout the coming year.

This momentous occasion will be celebrated by the good people of Middletown, N.Y. with a series of events. An illustrated history of the library is being compiled and will be published as a journal. The Library is also planning to allot each month of the year 2001 a different theme, drawing patrons to the library for a variety of celebrations. While honoring their years of service, the library will also be honoring the community and all of its members.

As we celebrate this centennial, we especially salute and thank the current Board of Trustees of the Thrall Library: Ms. Marlena F. Lange, President; Mr. Richard Bell, Vice President; Mr. Ralph Russo, Secretary; Mrs. Gertrude Mokotoff; and Mr. Stephen Shaw. We also salute and thank Mr. Kevin Gallagher, the current library Administrator.

The work that is being done by the Thrall Library and other public libraries like it throughout the country is amazing. Thrall has been bringing its patrons together and enriching their lives for a century. We are proud of the significant strides made by such this great institution.

Mr. Speaker, some of the fondest memories of my younger life were days and nights spent reading at the Thrall Library. While our society has changed in many ways since those years, one thing which has remained constant is the constant quest for knowledge, the insatiable curiosity, which motivates all of our young students. It is to them that we dedicate the centennial of the Thrall Library, with the promise of much greater knowledge to come in the future.

One of our nation's founding fathers, the architect of our Constitution who went on to serve as our fourth President, James Madison, once stated: "Learned institutions ought to be favorite objects with every free people. They throw that light over the public mind which is the best security against crafty and dangerous encroachments on the public liberty."

As the 100th anniversary of the Middletown Thrall Library approaches, let us recall these words of James Madison and appreciate the national treasure which is our public library system.

INDIAN POLICE TRY TO STOP SIKHS FROM VISITING RELIGIOUS SHRINE IN PAKISTAN—SIKHS REALIZE NEED FOR INDEPENDENT KHALISTAN

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 14, 2000

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, many of us have spoken to the House about the oppression of Sikhs and other minorities in India. I am distressed to have to report yet another incident.

Last month, thousands of Sikhs gathered from around the world to celebrate the birthday of the first Sikh guru, Guru Nankana Sahib, in his birthplace, Nankana Sahib, which is in present-day Pakistan. My good friend Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, was among those in attendance. The government of Pakistan had issued 3,200 visas for Sikhs from Punjab to come across the border and visit Nankana Sahib for this very important religious occasion. At the Attari, railroad station on the border between India and Pakistan, a group of 6,000 police with sticks called lathis charged the 3,200 Sikhs. They sprayed them with tear gas. Only 800, one-fourth of the number granted visas, were allowed to go to Nankana Sahib. Three-fourths were prevented from attending this religious event.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is purely a religious event. There was no politics involved. It was an observance of a religious occasion at a religious shrine, not a rally against the government of India. There was no good reason to prevent these Sikhs from attending this religious event except to intimidate them and create a climate of fear because of their religion. Freedom of religion is one of the essential freedoms of a democratic state, yet this action makes it clear again that religious freedom does not exist in India. It may exist in theory, it may be written in Indian law, but in actual fact there is no religious freedom for Sikhs, Christians, Muslims, and other minorities. In practice, the real policy of the militant Hindu nationalist Indian government, no matter who is in charge, is to create a Hindu state and wipe out all other religious expressions. As former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar pointed out, there is no difference between the ruling BJP and the opposition Congress Party. The effect for religious minorities is the same.

Since 1984, according to Inderjit Singh Jaijee's *The Politics of Genocide*, over 250,000 Sikhs have been murdered in India. India has killed more than 200,000 Christians in Nagaland since 1947, over 70,000 Kashmiri Muslims since 1988, and tens of thousands of other minorities. There is only one way to put an end to the killing and the oppression, as the Sikhs who were attacked at the Attari station can tell you. It is to allow the people of Khalistan, the people of Kashmir, the people of Nagalim, and all the nations of South Asia to live in freedom.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to tell the truth about India. Despite its pretense of democracy, it is a theocratic Hindu state where human rights for minorities are a matter of personal whim and political expediency. Such a country must

be declared a violator of basic religious rights, with all the penalties that entails. It must be declared a terrorist nation, as 21 of us wrote to President Clinton earlier this year, and a hostile country, as 17 of us wrote in another letter. Given this abysmal record the United States must stop its aid to India and demand a free and fair plebiscite in Punjab, Khalistan, in Kashmir, in Nagaland, and throughout India to decide the future of these Indian-held states in a democratic way. These measures will help to ensure that the glow of freedom can finally shine on all the people of South Asia.

I would like to submit the Council of Khalistan's open letter on this incident into the RECORD at this time. It is very informative, and I urge everyone to read it.

COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN,
Washington, DC, December 7, 2000.

POLICE HARASS SIKH PILGRIMS TO DISCOUR-
AGE THEM FROM VISITING NANKANA SAHIB

THERE IS NO PLACE FOR SIKHS IN INDIAN "DEMOCRACY"—PROFESSOR DARSHAN SINGH SAID AT NANKANA SAHIB, "IF A SIKH IS NOT A KHALISTANI, HE IS NOT A SIKH"

KHALSA JI: Last month, it was my privilege to attend the 531st birthday celebration of Guru Nanak Sahib. I would like to thank everyone involved for their hospitality. However, some Sikh pilgrims from Punjab who tried to attend this important religious event were not so cordially treated. A majority of the Sikhs were stopped at the Attari railway station on the border by 6000 police with lathis. 3200 pilgrims were beaten by the police and tear gas was used. Only 800 were allowed to visit Nankana Sahib. It was very clear to the Sikhs that the Indian government does not want Sikhs to visit Guru Nanak's birthplace. These Sikhs from Punjab realize that they need a free and independent Khalistan so that no one can ever again stop them from participating in the birthday celebration of Guru Nanak in Nankana Sahib.

This harassment of Sikhs shows us again that we need a sovereign, independent Khalistan to visit our holy shrines, to protect our rights, our security, and our dignity. Under Indian rule, Sikhs are not even allowed to visit Guru Nanak's birthplace to celebrate his birthday. Sikhs are slaves under Indian rule. As long as India continues to occupy our homeland, our slavery will continue. There is only one solution: a sovereign, free, and independent Khalistan. Only in a free Khalistan can Sikhs live in freedom, dignity, prosperity, and peace. Without political power, nations perish. Professor Darshan Singh Ragi, former Jathedar of the Akal Takht, said, "If a Sikh is not a Khalistani, he is not a Sikh." We must reclaim our lost sovereignty. If the BJP wants Hindu Raj, then why does it object to Khalsa Raj?

The Sikh Nation is sovereign and ruled Punjab up to 1849 when the British took over. Punjab was recognized by most of the world's major powers at that time. It was a truly democratic, truly secular state, rule of the Punjabis, by the Punjabis, for the Punjabis. Maharajah Ranjit Singh had Muslims and Hindus in his cabinet and among his generals. Under his rule, religious shrines of all religions were built, with his support. This is the kind of state that India claims to be, but is not. Behind the pretense of secular democracy, India is a Hindu theocratic state that oppresses Sikhs, Christians, Muslims, and others.

The Sikhs outside India are Khalistanis. They are the ones who will free Khalistan.

The present Akali leadership is under Indian government control. India will only allow Akali leaders to come out of India if they toe the line of the Indian government. These Akali leaders are not welcome in foreign countries.

None of the political parties will lead Punjab, Khalistan to freedom. The Shiromani Akali Dal, under the leadership of Chief Minister Badal, is in political coalition with the militant Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is part of the RSS, an organization founded in support of Fascism. Badal has not even kept the modest promises that he made to get elected: to free the political prisoners and to hold police officers responsible for their actions in the genocide against the Sikh Nation. Gurcharan Singh Tohra, leader of the All-India Akali Dal, worked with the Indian government prior to the attack on the Golden Temple and surrendered to the Indian forces when they came into the Sikh Nation's holiest shrine. Simranjit Singh Mann was elected to Parliament with the support of Badal after promising not to mention Khalistan. At the Sikh Day Parade in New York, Mann would not join in when the crowd chanted "Khalistan Zinbabad." Even U.S. Congressman Major Owens joined in. Yet Mann would not do so. This revealed his true colors. In 1989, he wrote to the Chief Justice of India pledging his support for India's constitution and territorial integrity.

The Congress Party is no better. It is the party that conducted the invasion and desecration of the Golden Temple. Recently, former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar said that there is no difference between the BJP and Congress, and he is right.

India's genocide against the Sikh Nation highlights the problem the Sikh Nation faces without our own raj. The Indian government continues its effort to try to wipe the Sikh religion out of existence. A free Khalistan is essential for the survival of the Sikh Nation.

There are still 50,000 Sikhs rotting in Indian jails without charge or trial. Yet the Sikh leaders have remained silent. According *The Politics of Genocide* by Inderjit Singh Jaijee, over 250,000 Sikhs have been murdered at the hands of the Indian government according to the Punjab State Magistracy, yet the Sikh leadership remains silent. Why can't they start a *Shantmai Morcha* to free the Sikh political prisoners?

The massacre of 35 Sikhs in Chithi Singhpora shows that without sovereignty, the Indian oppression of the Sikh Nation will continue. Two exhaustive investigations have proven that the Indian government is responsible for this massacre. Now the Indian government has even admitted that the alleged militants they killed were innocent. This atrocity underlines the need for a sovereign, independent Khalistan. The Indian government has demonstrated that it can conduct massacres of Sikhs whenever and wherever it wants. The Khalsa Panth must answer this wake-up call and free Khalistan.

Punjab is a police state. None of the political parties will bring us Khalistan. If we do not show courage and liberate Khalistan, the coming generations of Sikhs will also live in slavery. They will not forgive us if we do not liberate our homeland.

In Panjab, they will not procure your rice crop. Farmers are forced to buy fertilizer at extremely high prices; then the government buys up all their produce at artificially low prices to keep the farmers poor even though Panjab, with just two percent of the population, produces over 60 percent of India's wheat and rice reserves. The farmers of Pun-

jab should not have to live that way. In a free Khalistan, we can sell our produce anywhere in the world to maximize our profit. We will not have to have our water diverted to non-riparian states. Free Khalistan will bring economic prosperity for the farmers of Punjab in particular and other Punjabis in general. Indian rule only means economic deprivation and slavery.

India claims that it is a democracy, but there is more to democracy than elections. Democracies don't commit genocide. If India is a democracy, then why won't it allow the people of Punjab, Khalistan, Kashmir, and the other minority nations it occupies to vote on their political status in a free and fair plebiscite?

India is very unstable. India is on the verge of disintegration. It will disintegrate by the year 2010. Kashmir is going to be free from Indian control soon. As soon as Kashmir is free, Khalistan will follow it. The only way to escape Indian slavery is to liberate Khalistan. New Sikh leadership must emerge to free the Sikh Nation. They should demand self-determination. They should raise the slogan "India Quit Khalistan" and start *Shantmai Morcha* until we achieve freedom. We have now seen how the India government controls Sikh institutions and the entire Sikh leadership in Punjab.

Unless the Sikh Nation brings back the Sikh spirit and fight for truth and justice as practiced by Guru Nanak, the Khalsa Panth will not prosper. Remember Guru required the Khalsa to remove evil. Only in a free Khalistan will Sikhs be able to live as required by the Guru. Only in a free Khalistan can the Sikh religion flourish. Only then can the Sikh Nation finally enjoy the glow of freedom that is our birthright. Let us join hands to accomplish our goal of a free Khalistan by 2010.

Khalsa Ji, the responsibility is ours. We must start a Khalsa Raj Party and begin a *Shantmai Morcha* to liberate Khalistan. We must stop supporting leaders who are under the control of the brutal Indian government. We must remember our heritage, "Khalsa Bagi Yan Badshah." Let us commit ourselves to liberate Khalistan and control our own destiny so that the Sikh Nation can flourish and prosper. Support only those new leaders who are honest, dedicated, fearless, and committed to freedom for Khalistan. Any other course is support for keeping the Khalsa Panth in slavery.

Sincerely,

DR. GURMIT SINGH AULAKH,
President,
Council of Khalistan.

TRIBUTE TO ALLAN HOWE (D-UTAH), FORMER MEMBER OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HON. JAMES V. HANSEN

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 14, 2000

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to pay special tribute to a gentleman whom I—and many of my colleagues—knew and respected for many years. Our good friend Allan Howe (D-Utah) passed away today, December 14, 2000, after a valiant struggle with heart disease. Some of you may recall Allan from his service in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1975–77. Earlier this